

Clinton County says 'Happy Birthday Indiana'

BY LEEANN DOERFLEIN - ldoerflein@ftimes.com | Posted: Friday, October 7, 2016 6:00 am

Fourth-grade students from all four county schools and residents from all walks of life came to celebrate Indiana's 200th birthday on the Clinton County Courthouse Square on Thursday.

The Bicentennial Torch made its way through 71 counties before reaching Clinton County on Thursday. Joe Root began the torch's trek through the county when he received the hand-off at the county's border with Tipton County on State Road 28. The torch then made its way through the county and into Frankfort.

On the way, Alan Dunn carried the torch on his mammoth tractor, on which a torch carrier had to be attached on the fly by members of the Bicentennial Torch Relay Caravan, according to a report from organizer Carol Price.

The caravan included several Subaru Outbacks – the official Relay vehicle, troopers with the Indiana State Police and a utility trailer. Ball State University students were also in the caravan in one of the Subarus filming the entire torch procession through the state.

Dr. Joseph Dominik bicycled with the torch to about the 2000 block of East Wabash Street in Frankfort before handing it off to Larry Price, also riding on two wheels. Price then transported the torch to Young Street, where Troy Bacon took over until Harrison Street, at which Bud Wainscott carried the flame.

Downtown, Wainscott handed the torch off the Frankfort Mayor Chris McBarnes who carried the torch down Main Street to Washington Street and the northern part of the square, where the celebration took place.

The torch continued through the county as the ceremony commenced on the square.

Remarks from Commissioner President Scott Shoemaker and McBarnes, along with music and song, marked the occasion.

The students came together in an all-county performance to honor their home state. An all-county band played "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the fourth graders sang "Back Home Again in Indiana."

Also, an all-county choir sang "On the Banks of the Wabash," and the event closed with the large crowd of residents joining the students in singing "Happy Birthday" to Indiana.

Teachers and administrators from all four county schools were glad to see their students representing the county well. Community Schools of Frankfort Assistant Superintendent Joel McKinney said Frankfort students were excited to be part of the celebration.



Passing the torch

Shake: Bud Wainscott and Mayor Chris McBarnes shake hands after Wainscott passes the Indiana Bicentennial Relay Torch to McBarnes at the Clinton County Courthouse Square.

“They’ve been looking forward to this. Their teachers and their choir teachers have been helping them learn the song and teaching them about Indiana history,” McKinney said. “The best part is that the students get to participate and spectate.”

CSF School Board member Karen Sutton said the memories made at the celebration will stick with the students for a lifetime.

“We were just talking about the memories they are making,” Sutton said. “They are going to remember this forever.”

Rossville High School student Grace Beard, a member of the all-county choir, also was glad to help celebrate Indiana’s birthday.

“I’m really happy to be a part of this,” Beard said. “There is a lot of things to be proud of in Indiana. One thing I can think of is the Indy 500.”

Shoemaker kicked off the remarks by thanking all county residents and students for coming out to the celebration.

McBarnes thanked veterans, including his grandfather, for fighting for citizens’ freedoms. Without them, he said, 200 years of Indiana statehood would not be possible.

“It is because of those veterans that we are celebrating, in our little town square in the heartland of this county, Indiana’s 200th birthday,” McBarnes said. “I look out into this crowd and I see faces of the greatest generation this country has ever seen. Off to my right I see one face in particular, my grandfather, Richard McBarnes.”

He also encouraged the young people present to take seriously the responsibility of carrying forward a metaphorical torch of freedom.

“Now, they are handing that torch of freedom and liberty to us – you and me. This is a great responsibility, young people. Now what we do with it will define us 200 years from now,” McBarnes said. “Let’s carry that torch. Do well in school. Respect your elders. We have to leave this country better than we found it. Are you with me, young people? Can you help me?”

Fourth graders and high school students alike clapped, cheered and waved Indiana flags in response.

McBarnes then issued a proclamation declaring Frankfort’s recognition of the bicentennial.

After the celebration, the torch left Frankfort on State Road 75 and made its way to the Carroll County line to continue the relay.

The county’s oldest torchbearer, 96-year-old LeRoy Good, rode in a Plymouth Woody that was manufactured in Frankfort. Good, as a local historian and World War II veteran, was very happy to be a part of the relay.

“Two hundred years is a special milestone for a state. I missed the first 100 years by four years,” Good said. “I’ve been alive almost half as long as Indiana has.”

Good was happy to see the county come together to celebrate Indiana. This is the second huge birthday milestone he has seen; he recalled attending the City of Frankfort's 100 year birthday party on the courthouse square in 1930.

"I remember when Frankfort had its centennial," Good said. "It was a celebration just as big as this right here on the square."

Torchbearer Steve Glover, owner of Glover's Ice Cream, carried the torch by bicycle along State Road 75 between County Road 200 North and 300 North.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime thing. This is a bicentennial thing. It will definitely only happen once my lifetime," Glover said. "To be able to represent Clinton County is amazing. My roots are deep, my family has always been here. I love the values of our state. Everything about Indiana is great."